

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

CAPPS, Lois (Democrat)
Representative, 23rd District, California
Elected 10Mar98 to the 105th Congress
Reelected to succeeding Congresses



BACKGROUND

Born: Ladysmith, Wisconsin - 10 January 1938

Home: Santa Barbara, California

Marital status: Widow - 3 children (daughter, aged 35, died of cancer in Feb 2000)

Religion: Lutheran

Education: Pacific Lutheran U, BS, '59; Yale U, MA., '64, U of Calif, Santa Barbara, MA, '90

Military: None

Profession: School nurse; college educator

Political: Ran in special election for the 22nd District seat in 10Mar98 to succeed late husband, Walter (D), who died after heart attack on 28Oct97. Defeated state Rep Tom Bordonaro with 53% of vote. Reelected in 1998 general election with 57% of the vote, in 2000 with 53%, and in 2002 with 59% of the vote. Rep Capps won 98 special election by staying focused on saleable Democratic themes: education, health care and environment.

Rep Capps is a liberal to moderate Democrat who focuses much of her attention on health care, education, protection of the environment, and space technology as it relates to the mission of Vandenberg AFB that was in her district until 2003. Having lost her older daughter to cancer, has a close relationship with Rep Deborah Pryce (R-OH) who lost her daughter in a similar fashion. In 106th Congress, said she was pleased that the milcon bill included \$16.8M to continue a much-needed family housing project at Vandenberg AFB. During debate on H.R. 1569, prohibiting funding for ground troops in Yugoslavia, observed that there are a myriad of circumstances that could necessitate the use of some ground forces; did not believe Congress should tie the hands of the military commanders and risk putting troops in any unnecessary risk. Promised to support increased military pay, improved health care coverage, and a strengthened retirement system. Announced that she supported permanent normal trade relations with China. Stated that the FY01 DoD appns bill "not only recognizes the important role Vandenberg AFB plays in our nation's defense, but also improves pay and other benefits for our much deserving military personnel." During a budget debate, asserted that US military personnel were "stretched too thin" and veterans' needs have been neglected.

In the 107th Congress, believed that the Army's new black berets should be made in the US. Announced that she was circulating a letter to the President urging him to review this shortsighted decision and consider terminating the foreign contracts. Expressed support for H.R. 2540, veterans benefits programs improvements. Called for greater US engagement in the Mideast peace process and a recognition of the suffering of the Palestinian people. Opposed granting President Bush authority to use US military forces against Iraq.

Prior to the 108th Congress represented Vandenberg AFB. Still has a constituent interest in the base. At the beginning of the 108th Congress was assigned to the Budget Cmte, where she said national security needs were crucial in the effort to fight terrorism. Stressed that security also entailed homeland security and a healthy economy. Criticized the President's FY04 budget for not providing funding for military action in Iraq while pursuing such a policy.

AF Bases: Vandenberg AFB (interest only; base now in Rep Gallegly's 24th District)

COMMITTEES

ENERGY AND COMMERCE – Subcs on: Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection;
Environment and Hazardous Materials; Health

BUDGET